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ABSTRACT

Technical education students need to realize high expectations and goals in writing. They have a plethora of purposes to be good communicators in written endeavors. This paper first outlines the reasons why they need to be careful with written communications, and then lists some of the purposes for which their communications are written. The paper also discusses the mechanics of written communication, from using a word processor to observing necessary grammar rules. It then proceeds to discuss writing stylistics, such as variety in sentence construction. The paper concludes by outlining the different types of sentences, i.e., interrogative, declarative, imperative, and exclamatory. It notes that in technical education classes, students need to practice writing within a utilitarian framework, since they will ultimately practice their written communication in the workplace. (NKA)

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Writing Achievement in Technical Education.

by Marlow Ediger

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WRITING ACHIEVEMENT IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The technical education student needs to be able to communicate clearly in writing presently and at the future work place. He/she has a plethora of purposes to be a good communicator in written endeavors for the following reasons:

1. receiver of messages expect clarity to be involved in the technical education arena. High expectations for quality communication are then in the offing.
2. politeness and consideration for others are involved when clarity of ideas are communicated in written endeavors.
3. rules of grammar and sentence structure are involved in meaningful writing.
4. proper punctuation needs to be exhibited so that clarity of content and distinct ideas are being communicated.
5. appropriate indentation of paragraphs needs to be emphasized to indicate that a new coherent set of ideas is being expressed.
6. sequence of ideas within a paragraph as well as among paragraphs assists the reader to understand what is being read.
7. agreement of subject and predicate is a foundational concept in written communication.
8. rules for capitalization of words is a necessary ingredient in writing to enhance meaning and vocabulary in interpretation of written work.
9. modifiers such as adjectives and adverbs need to be placed correctly within sentences so that the reader may interpret ideas appropriately.
10. a variety of kinds of sentences need to be incorporated into written products, not only for meaningful writing, but also to prevent boredom or sameness in sentence structure (See Kausalya, 2001, Chapter Two).

Technical education students need to realize high expectations and goals in writing. They are expected to realize more optimal achievement when communicating with others. Hazy, vague communications make for errors and lost time when communicating content effectively to others.

Ideas Expressed in Writing

Technical education students need to be certain that vivid messages are communicated in writing. What the messages are to contain will depend upon the purpose in writing. These purposes, for example, include writing necessary information in

a) all course requirements.
b) business letters and personal correspondence.
c) written reports, note taking in class, summaries, outlines, essays, and conclusions.
d) projects involving print discourse developed individually and/or collaboratively.
e) diagrams with accompanying related neat labels.
f) journal writing, logs, and diary entries to reveal achievement in ongoing lessons and units of study.
g) narrative, expository, and creative writing in technical education.
h) written work in current events and new developments in technical education.
i) rubrics to be used in appraising achievement in student written work.
j) self evaluation standards in assessing the self in achievement and progress in different facets of technical education (Ediger, 1994, 23-24).

Ideas contained in the above named purposes in writing need to contain topic sentences where applicable for each paragraph, possess order in writing the sequential paragraphs, and express content in a manner of clarity so that the reader might comprehend what is being communicated in writing. For example, complete information in personal correspondence needs to answer questions of when, which, why, what, and where -- the five w's of clarity in written communication. It is surprising how many writers omit one of the five w's such as "when" a meeting is to be held. Thus, a vital item has been left out. Receivers of the written communication then need to e- mail, fax, or call by telephone to obtain this bit of vital information. There may be no e- mail number given in the written communication and a voice recorder responds to the telephone call. These kinds of problems could certainly be eliminated by having clarity to begin with in the written communication.

Quality communication could involve students being actively involved in writing the class newsletter on a weekly basis, designing a web page for important notices for class members, as well as developing a bulletin board display containing salient information for technical education classmates.

Modern means of communication also require that the technical education student becomes proficient in the use of the word processor. The word processor makes it possible to secure an excellent final document for communication purposes

(Ediger, 1994, 76-77). Spell checkers has been a god send for those who do not spell words correctly. However, the writer in using the word processor and spell checkers still needs to be a good speller. Why? A word needs to be spelled in a manner which is close enough to the correct word since "ngbll' cannot be determined correctly by spell checkers for "night." Nor will spell checkers be able to ascertain if an incorrect homonym has been used in written communication, among other deficiencies in writing. The technical education student always must be a good proof reader. This is the responsibility of the sender of messages (Ediger, 1999, 183-191)!

The Mechanics Of Written Communication

Technical education students need to use necessary rules of grammar in written communication. Grammar becomes a tool to improve clarity in writing. Agreement of subject and predicate must be in evidence in the written communication. In the sentence, "Technical education students in class needs to attend sessions regularly," lacks agreement between the subject "students" and the predicate "needs." "Students" is plural in number and requires a plural predicate "need."

Modifiers of the subject (adjectives) and of predicates (adverbs) need to be positioned correctly. For example, the following sentence lacks clarity: The technical education student types rapidly with a red sweater; rather it should read: The technical education student with a red sweater types rapidly. The phrase "with a red sweater" is an adjective and modifies the subject "student." Clearness in writing also requires proper punctuation in written work. In a class newsletter, for example, if the following item is contained therein, how many students worked on the class project? Dale Lee Martin Lindsey Douglass and John developed a very informative bulletin board display. There could be as many as six persons or as few as three if Dale Lee Martin, Lindsey Douglass, and John are separate beings. If so, the end person listed should also contain the last name. It then becomes vital for commas to be used correctly when words in a series occur in written communication (Ediger, 2000, 59-68).

Proper indentation of paragraphs are musts to indicate that a new coherent set of ideas are forthcoming. The new paragraph indicates that there is a change of emphasis from one sequential paragraph to the next. The sequence indicates a relationship of paragraphs, but the direction of expressed content has been changed. The first word in any paragraph is always capitalized

as is true of the first word in any sentence. Proper nouns always appear in capital letters e. g. Martha (the name of a particular person), Paris (the name of a city), Belgium (the name of a nation), the Nile (the name of a particular river, January (the name of one of the twelve months of the calendar year), and Europe (the name of a continent), among others. These are a few uses when capitalizing words is salient in written communication. The technical education student should become well versed in using capital letters properly in all written communication (See Ediger, 1978, 412-416).

Varying Sentence Variety in Writing

A variety of sentences need to be written to develop and maintain reader interest in what is being communicated in written form. Simple sentences such as in the following five patterns may be written:

1. The man wrote a letter (subject ---- predicate --- direct object)
2. Jay studied (subject-- predicate).
3. Alicia was tall (subject-- predicate -- predicate adjective).
4. The man was a carpenter (subject -- predicate --- predicate noun).
5. Albert gave Judy the newsletter (subject -- predicate--- indirect object -- direct object).

Each of the above named simple sentences should be expanded in order to be more meaningful to the reader. For example in sentence pattern number one above, the following expansions may be added: The short man with a long coat wrote a highly informative letter on technical education. The word "short" is an adjective and describes "man," whereas "with a long coat" is an adjective phrase and also describes "man." The word "highly" is an adverb and modifies an adjective "informative." "Informative" is an adjective since it describes "letter;" "on technical education " is an adjective phrase and describes what kind of "letter" it was. Expanding a sentence then can be done to any of the five sentence patterns in English with adjectives and adjective phrases describing nouns, whereas adverbs and adverb phrases describe adjectives, adverbs, and other adverbs (See Ediger, 1999, 33-42). With practice and purposeful writing activities, technical education students can master

1. different sentence patterns.
2. expanding sentences in ongoing written work.

Variety in written work should also include using compound sentences whereby two simple sentences are combined to form one sentence: The man wrote a letter and Jay studied. Each underlined sentence is an independent clause. The two independent clauses are joined together with the conjunction or joining word "and" to now make a compound sentence. Compound sentences may be expanded the same way as was true of simple sentences.

Complex sentences may contain one independent clause and one dependent clause: While the man wrote a letter, Jay studied." "While the man wrote a letter" does not make sense by itself and is then dependent upon the independent clause "Jay studied" for meaningful written work.

As a third kind of sentence, compound complex sentences as the name indicates contains a compound sentence component as well as one or more dependent clause. "The man wrote a letter, and Jay slept" as indicated previously is a compound sentence. By adding a dependent clause as underlined "While Albert gave Judy the newsletter, the man wrote the letter and Jay studied," a compound complex sentence results.

Technical education students need to practice varying the kinds of sentences written by using

1. simple sentences.
2. compound sentences.
3. compound complex sentences (Ediger, 1999, 109-115).

Time, effort, and quality sequence are necessary for the technical education student to be able to write meaningfully using a variety of kinds of sentence patterns and different kinds of sentences.

In Closing

The author would like to emphasize also that the technical education student understand the different types of sentences in communicating ideas in writing. There are

1. interrogative sentences whereby questions are raised and the end punctuation mark is the question mark.
2. declarative sentences which state facts or opinions, ending with a period.
3. imperative sentences are those that issue a command or a request, also ending with a period.
4. exclamatory sentences which indicate very strong

feelings and end with an exclamation mark.

Technical education students, to do well in class and at the workplace need to achieve optimally in writing. Instructors in technical education and supervisors at the work place desire quality communication from all. In technical education classes, students need to practice writing within a utilitarian framework.

There are deficiencies in English achievement, consisting of reading and writing, whereby high school students have done poorly. Ninety four per cent of Putnam, Massachusetts tenth graders failed the English section of a mandated test in an article entitled, "A Quiet Crises: Unprepared for High Stakes Testing (Education Week, April 18, 2001). Certainly, students need to be better prepared for doing well in English in order to communicate effectively with others.

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